

a softball game between the Baker staff and the John Tower staff. My favorite photograph of her is one Howard took at the Baker home when we were celebrating our marriage. Our daughter Leslee was flower girl at Darek and Karen's wedding. I occupy the same Senate office Howard once had in the Dirksen Senate office building. My desk on the Senate floor was once his desk.

As his legislative assistant, I wrote his speeches, prompting him to tell the story at least 100 times of how I once asked to see him privately to determine if there was some problem with our relationship because I had learned that he never said in his speeches any of the words that I had written.

"Lamar," he replied, "we have a perfect relationship. You write what you want to write—and I'll say what I want to say."

Occasionally a young person will ask me, "How can I become involved in politics?"

My answer always is, "Find someone you respect, volunteer to help him or her do anything legal, and learn all you can from them. That's what I did."

How fortunate we were to know, to be inspired by, and to learn from Tennessee's favorite son and one of our country's finest leaders, Howard Baker.

Dan Quayle, when he was a senator, summed it up: "There's Howard Baker," he said, "and then there's the rest of us senators."

Mr. MCCONNELL. I would like to share some of Senator ALEXANDER's observations about Senator Baker because, as I said, I think they are important, timely lessons about the purpose and potential of our service.

One of the things that stands out in all the tributes to Senator Baker, including Senator ALEXANDER's, is the way in which he embodied the rare trait of taking himself lightly even as he took his duties seriously.

I will give you an example. One of the time-honored traditions around here is for new Senators to labor over their maiden speeches as if Pericles himself were standing in judgment from the Presiding Officer's chair. Senator Baker was no exception. His maiden speech was long, thoughtful, and dense—so much so that when he asked his father-in-law, then-Senate Republican Leader Everett Dirksen, for his reaction, Dirksen is said to have remarked: "Howard, Howard, perhaps you should occasionally enjoy the luxury of an unexpressed thought."

It was the kind of comment that might have stung a lesser Senator, but as Senator ALEXANDER pointed out in mentioning that last week, Baker was a quick learner. About a week or so later, Howard rose again—this time to challenge one of his Democratic colleagues to a game of tennis. The Senator in question had just taken a swipe at the vigor of his Republican colleagues, particularly the new ones, and Senator Baker decided to rise to the challenge, tongue firmly in cheek.

It was a star performance. The Senator that Baker challenged even interrupted him at one point to suggest that it was "one of the best maiden speeches that has ever been delivered in this chamber." Evidently he had missed Baker's actual maiden speech. But Senator Baker's legendary ability to adapt

was now firmly established and it set the tone for a two-decade run in which he would be called upon to deploy his many other talents and skills to defuse tensions, resolve conflicts, repair trust, build consensus, and, frankly, just to put people at ease—because sometimes in this business there is nothing more important than just that: to just keep the bearings oiled.

We have all been recently reminded of how Senator Baker put his own ambitions aside to help rebuild the Reagan White House after Iran-Contra. It was a great testament to his values and to his feel for priorities. What Senator ALEXANDER reminded us last week was that these former political rivals—Baker and Reagan—started every day in the White House together telling each other a little story. They had no problem putting their past disputes behind them and building a close working friendship based on mutual respect, common purpose, love of country, and of course good humor. They were adults, busy about serious business, and they conducted that business with dignity and with grace.

The larger point is that while people talk a lot about the importance of having political skill in Washington these days, the importance of temperament cannot be overstated. The way Senator Baker conducted himself here and in the White House is eloquent testimony of that.

It is not that he was laid back. As Senator ALEXANDER put it, behind Baker's pleasant demeanor was a restless ambition that would propel him to the heights of American politics and government for 40 years, but he could subordinate that ambition when he felt the moment or the country needed him to. He was persistent about achieving a result but never insisted that his way was the only way to do it. It is a quality that required an ability to listen. In Baker's case that meant being an eloquent listener, a trait Senator ALEXANDER put above all the others in Baker's formidable arsenal.

Here is how Senator Baker himself once put it:

There is a difference between hearing and understanding what people say. You don't have to agree, but you have to hear what they've got to say. And if you do, the chances are much better you'll be able to translate that into a useful position and even useful leadership.

Senator ALEXANDER pointed out Howard Baker had courage. He helped round up the votes to ratify the Panama Canal Treaty even though he must have known it would not help him much in a Republican primary for President, to put it mildly. When the integrity of our politics was at stake, he did not hesitate to take on a President of his own party in a very public way—an impulse that one hopes lawmakers in both parties could muster today if the integrity of our system called for it again.

But perhaps most important of all, Howard Baker was grounded. He had an

important job to do, and he did it well, but he also kept a healthy distance from his work. His photograph of President Reagan's inaugural in January 1981 illustrates the point. Just behind the new President we can spot the Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill and the new Vice President George Bush. Then right there between them is a man holding up a camera to capture the moment. It is the new Senate majority leader standing there like an ordinary spectator with a very good seat. It was Howard Baker.

Senator ALEXANDER summed up Baker's groundedness this way: "Howard Baker never stopped sounding like where he grew up."

Senator Baker was a fixture here for decades, but Huntsville was always home. Perhaps that is also why Senator Baker took his stewardship of the Senate so very seriously. He knew he was not going to be around forever and that meant he had a duty to make the Senate work and to preserve it as a place where disputes and disagreements are sifted and sorted out and where stable, durable solutions are slowly but surely achieved. It is how he earned the nickname "the great conciliator."

When Dan Quayle was a Senator here, he used to say: "There's Howard Baker, and then there's the rest of us."

Over the past week, we have been reminded of why that was, and I thank Senator ALEXANDER for helping us remember why his friend and mentor meant so much to this country and this institution.

May the memory of Howard Henry Baker inspire us to be our best selves and even better Senators.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each, with the majority controlling the first 30 minutes and the Republicans controlling the second 30 minutes.

The Senator from Tennessee.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Thank you, Mr. President. I believe it is correct that Senator CORKER and I, before morning business begins, have a few minutes to reflect on Senator Baker.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. That understanding is correct.

Mr. ALEXANDER. That is correct?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is under morning business right now, but the Senator from Tennessee is recognized.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask consent that before morning business begin that Senator CORKER and I be permitted to reflect on Senator Baker.